

Sheep Mountain Mule Deer Initiative Hunt Areas 61,74,75,76,77



Meeting Goals

- Provide Information on Mule Deer, Specifically the Sheep Mountain Herd
- Identify and Prioritize Factors that can Improve Mule Deer Hunting and Populations within this herd
- This is **NOT** a Season Setting Meeting
 - Season's can and should be discussed, but this meeting will not Usurp the existing Season Setting Process

Why Are We Here?

- ◉ This is part of a Statewide Mule Deer Mgt Effort
- ◉ Decreasing Mule Deer Populations
- ◉ Low Fawn Ratios
- ◉ Decreasing Hunter Satisfaction
- ◉ Low Hunter Success
- ◉ Conversations with Concerned Sportsman and Landowners

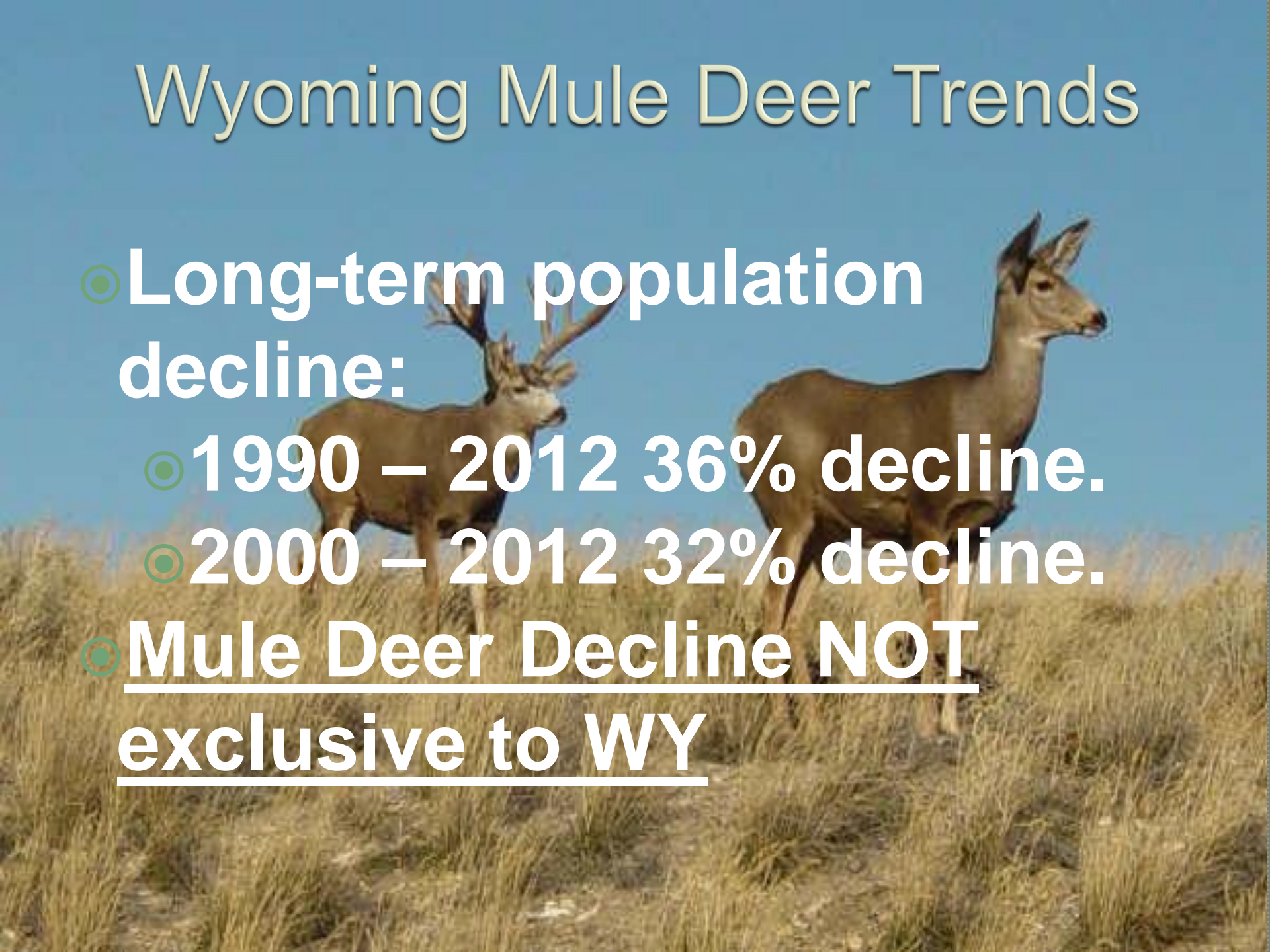
Mule Deer in Wyoming

Wyoming's Mule Deer Populations

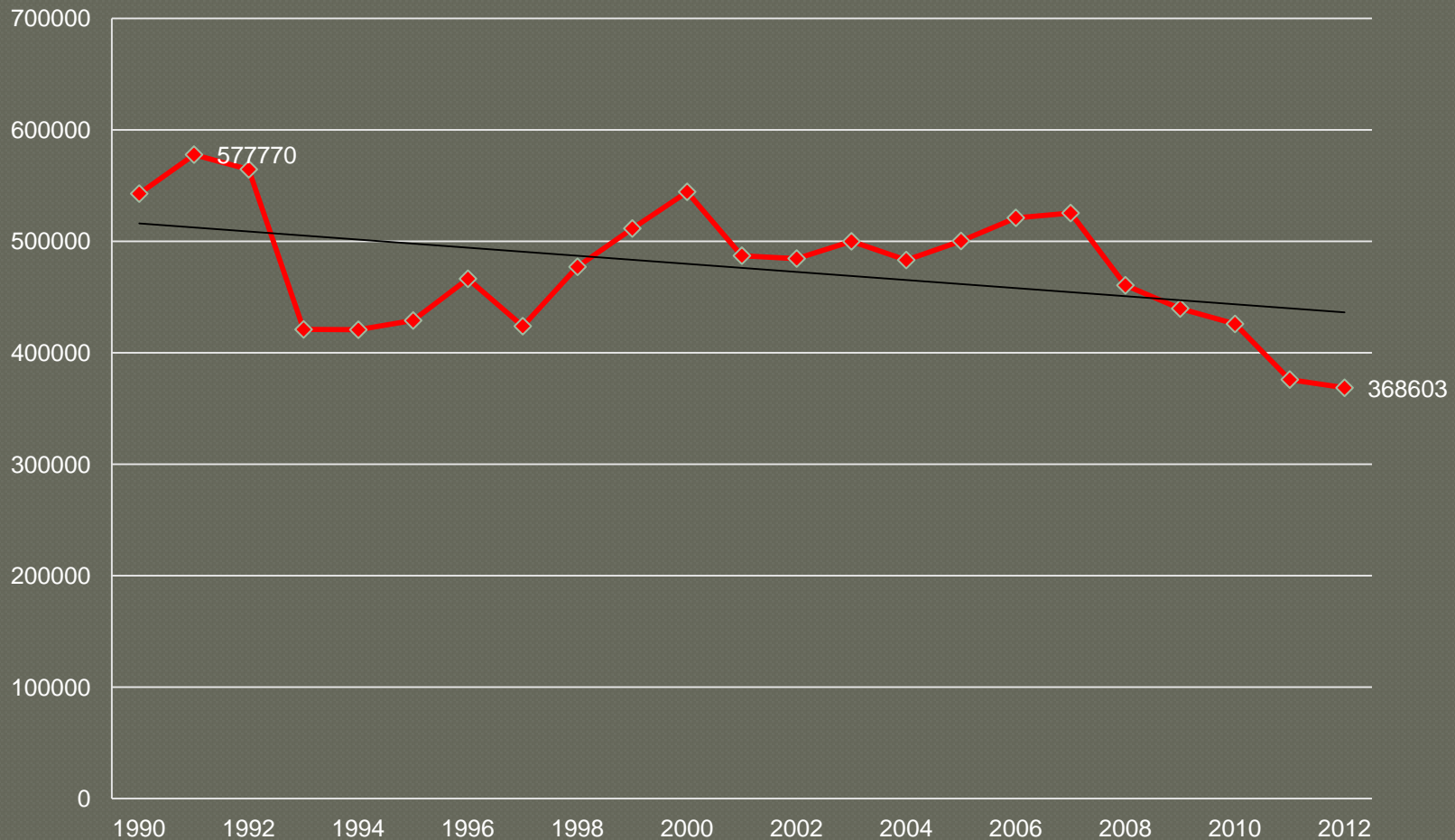


Wyoming Mule Deer Trends

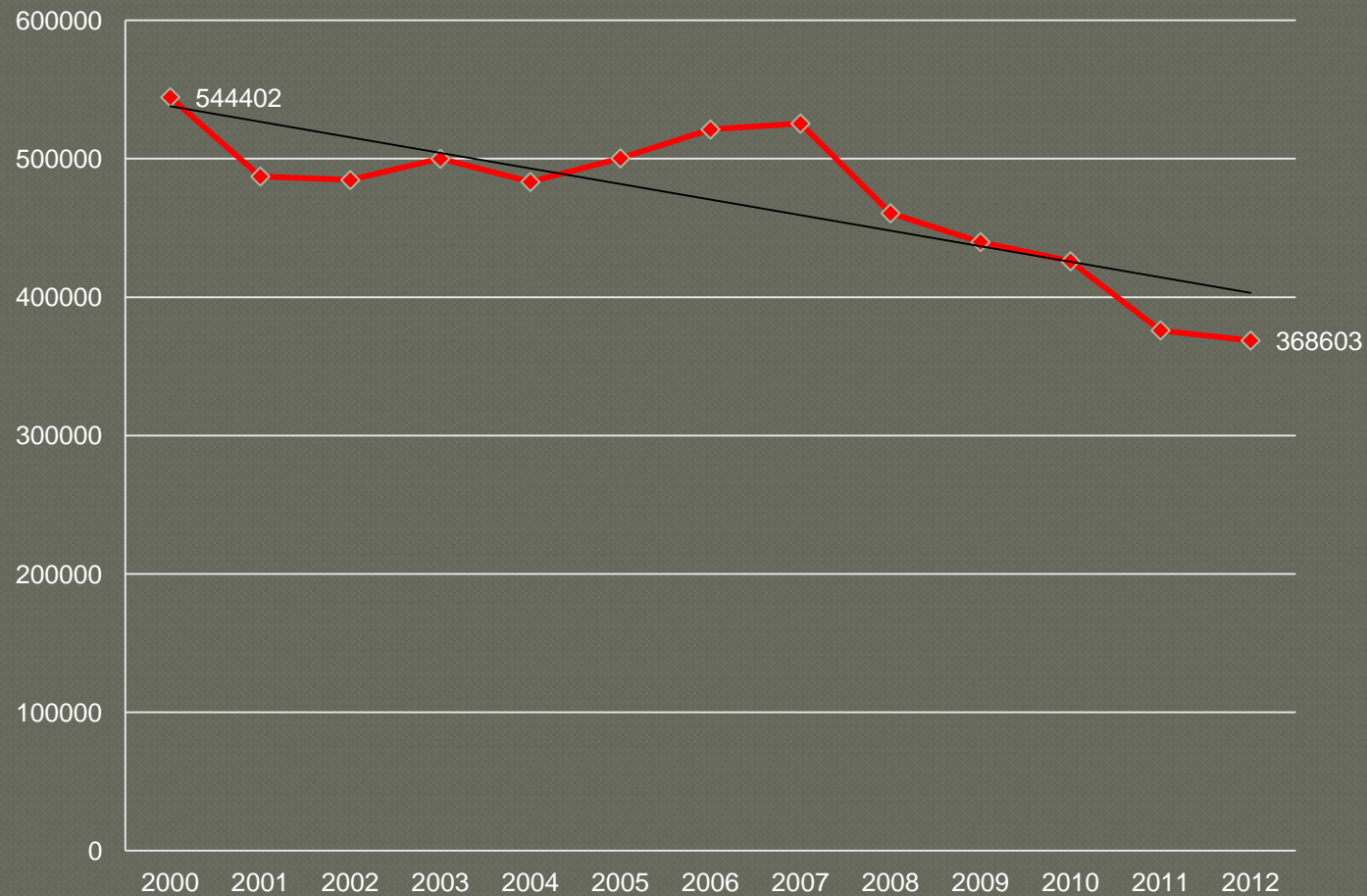
- Long-term population decline:
 - 1990 – 2012 36% decline.
 - 2000 – 2012 32% decline.
- Mule Deer Decline NOT exclusive to WY



Statewide 1990 - 2012



Statewide Population 2000 - 2012



GOT FAWNS?



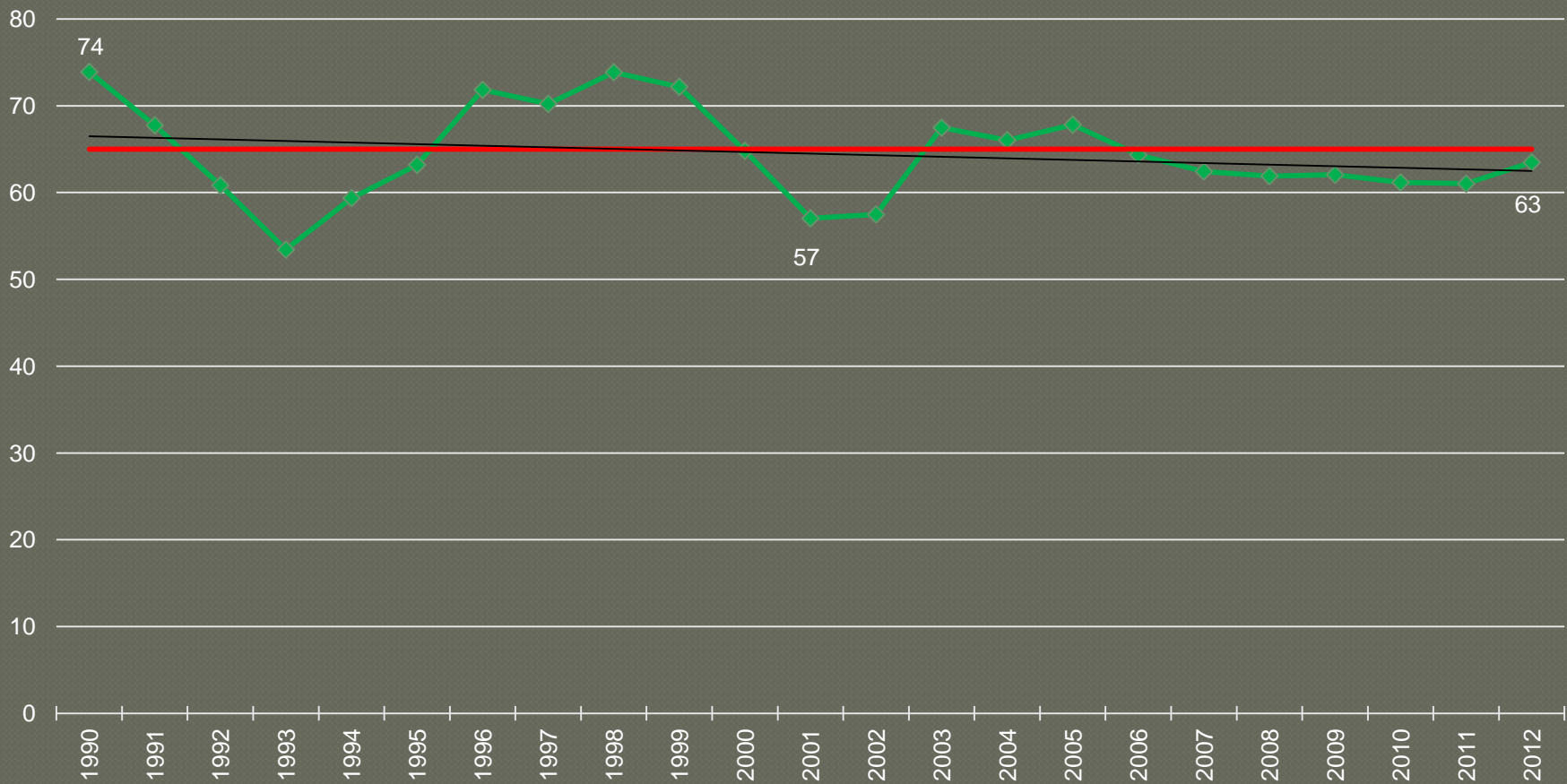
Wyoming Mule Deer Trends

- Fawn productivity
 - In 30 years we have lost 16/100 fawns or 0.5 fawns/100 does/year. This is ~20% decline.
 - Below 66/100 fawns in 13 of the last 30 years and 9 years since 2000.

Statewide Fawn Ratios 1982 - 2012



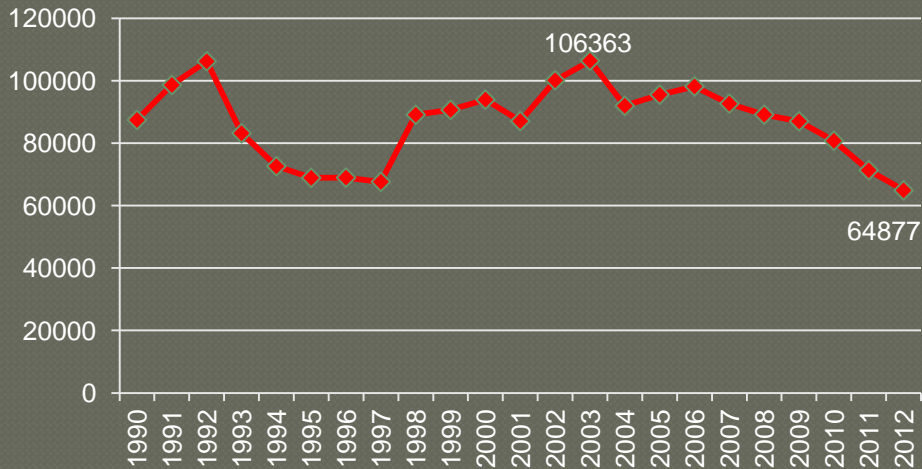
Statewide Fawn Ratios 1990 - 2012



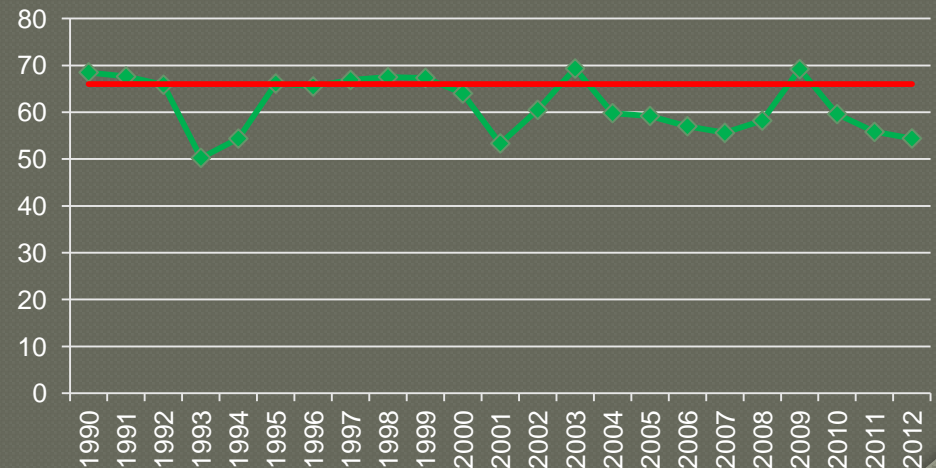
Laramie

1990 - 2012

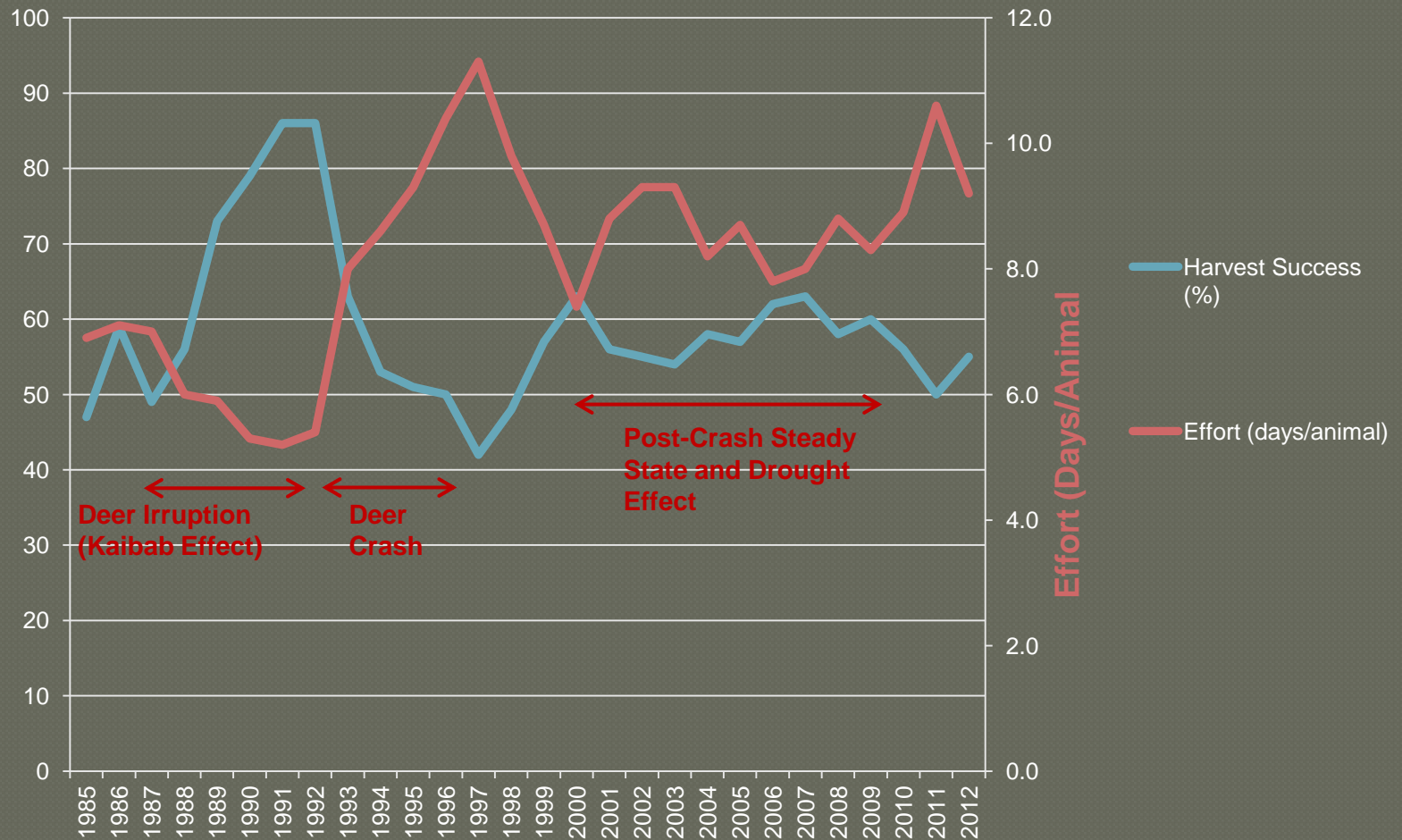
Population Estimate



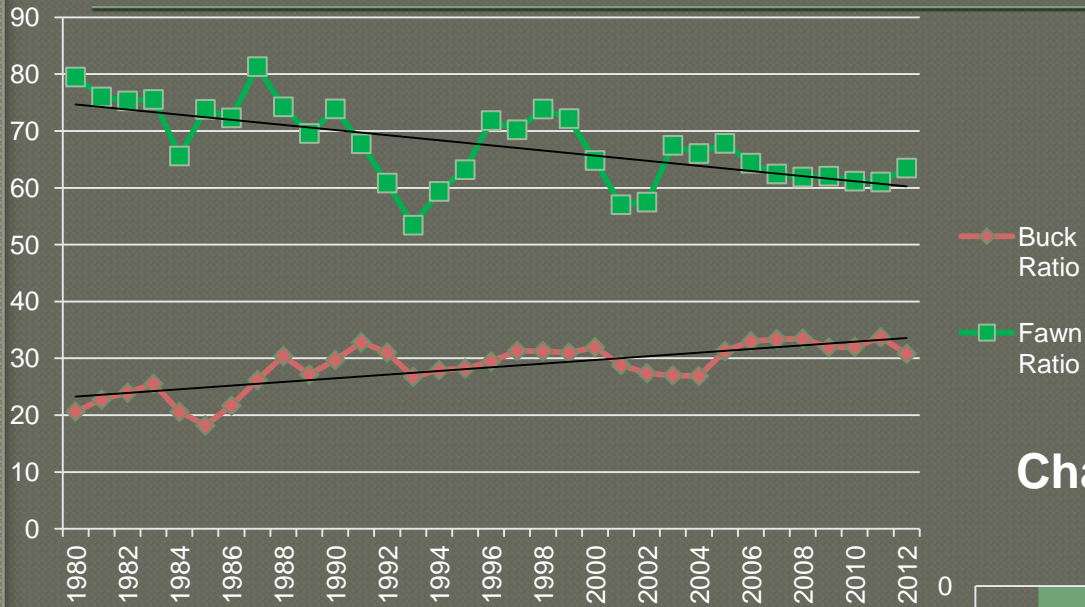
Fawns



Harvest Data



Buck Ratios



Change in Population (per year) Statewide



Mule Deer Management: What have we done?

- Deer Management
 - Implemented “sightability” estimates
 - Utilizing improved population projection techniques
- Hunting Seasons
 - Instituted limited quota seasons in the Platte Valley
 - Instituted antler point restrictions
 - Standardized opening and closing dates in western Wyoming
 - Reduced hunting season lengths
 - Moved openers to week days
 - Limited harvest to bucks only
 - Decreased doe/fawn harvest
 - Reduced nonresident region quotas
 - Conducted post hunt season meetings



Mule Deer Management: What have we done?



○ Predators

- Effects of predation remain high on people's minds
- Worked with ADMB and local PMB's on coyote control where appropriate
- Increased mountain lion and black bear harvest quotas where appropriate

○ Habitat

- Commission - \$500,000 Platte Valley Habitat Partnership
- Proposed 40,000 acres for treatment in the Wyoming Range Plan
- Numerous projects implemented statewide
- Refocused attention on summer and fall transition range



2006-2012: Where are we now?



- Fewer people agree that there were adequate numbers of bucks
 - 2006: 64% agreed there was an adequate number
 - 2012: 47% agreed there was an adequate number
- Definitions of a “large antlered buck”
 - 2006: 37% of residents thought 21-25”
 - 2012: 37% of residents said 26-30”
- Antlerless harvest found to be an acceptable deer management tool in both studies



Questions?



Mark Gocke, WGF

Breakout Group Question

How can we manage for a healthy mule deer herd and provide a quality mule deer hunting experience?

2006-2012: Where are we now?

- Satisfaction remains strong among Wyoming hunters
 - 2006: 84% of hunters satisfied with quality of their experience
 - 2012: 74% of hunters satisfied with quality of their experience
- Enjoyment of hunting, “plenty of mule deer”, and harvest success contribute to satisfaction
- “Not enough deer” and crowding contribute to dissatisfaction



2006-2012: Where are we now?

- A majority of residents still hunt only one or two hunt areas in a single season
 - 2006: 90% of residents
 - 2012: 70% of residents
- “Close to home”
- Hunter crowding
 - 2006: 35% residents agreed too many other hunters in the area
 - 2012: 50% of residents agreed too many other hunters in the area



2006-2012: Where are we now?

- Quality of the hunting experience continues to be important
- Increased interest in limited quota hunting
 - 2006: general seasons = 55%; limited quota = 28%
 - 2012: general seasons = 48%; limited quota = 35%
- Increased interest in limiting numbers of hunters in the field
 - 2006: 50% of residents support limiting the numbers of hunters in the field
 - 2012: 64% of residents support limiting numbers of hunters in the field
- Strong interest in hunting each year
- Support for current weapon season structure



markgoetze.com

2006-2012: Where are we now?



- Recognition of the importance of quality and amount of habitat to deer populations
- Majority of hunters continue to say habitat has remained the same or gotten worse



- 2006: remained the same = 56%; gotten worse = 12%
- 2012: remained the same = 42%; gotten worse = 34%
- Among residents in 2012, 40% felt it had gotten worse